

# Communications toolkit

It is well [recognised](#) people with learning disabilities have poorer physical and mental health compared to others, and a lower life expectancy.

Information on people with and without learning disabilities was [collected](#) from over half of GP practices in England in 2014-15 and 2015-16, to identify potential differences in the treatment, health status, and outcomes of people with learning disabilities compared with the rest of the population.

Overall, in 2015-16, 0.45 per cent of the population were recorded as having a learning disability. In order to help address health inequalities more people with a learning disability need to be registered on their GP learning disability register – opening up the opportunity for them to access more support and have an Annual Health Check.

Notably the percentage of patients known to their GP as having a learning disability who received an annual learning disability health check increased to 46 per cent from 43 per cent in 2014-15, but this is still less than half.

The enclosed messages and resources were designed to aid increased awareness and understanding of the GP learning disability register, Annual Health Checks, Health Action Plans and Summary Care Records with Additional Information (SCRAI) – available to people with learning disabilities so they [Don't Miss Out](#).

This toolkit ([for immediate use](#)) has been distributed to Transforming Care Partnerships, CCG's, Providers, GP practices, charities and advocacy groups across the south of England. Together we can spread the word and start helping people with learning disabilities get better healthcare.

Contact [emily.prior@nhs.net](mailto:emily.prior@nhs.net) if you have any questions or wish to provide feedback on this toolkit.

## Don't Miss Out

NHS England teamed up with Mencap to produce two videos and a series of guides called [Don't Miss Out](#) which highlights the benefits of being on the learning disability register – including getting a free health check every year.

Too many people with a learning disability miss out on getting the very best healthcare because they are not on their GP's learning disability register. Importantly, those on the GP learning disability register can have extra help, including:

- Extra time for appointments
- Accessible information, for example easy read
- An Annual Health Check to help them maintain their health, detect conditions and illnesses

## NEW National Health Check (learning disabilities) Clinical Template

*– Message to GPs via CCGs / TCPs*

The Learning Disability Programme at NHS England is working with partners to reduce health inequalities and improve the uptake, quality and outcome of the Learning Disability Annual Health Check. As part of this work, a new National Electronic Health Check (Learning Disabilities) Clinical Template has been produced for GPs to use when providing an Annual Health Check for individuals with a learning disability. In addition the new GP contract has been agreed with an increased payment (£140) for this enhanced service health check.

This new clinical template is designed on the coding currently used in practice systems (with drop down options) – it does not immediately translate into a hard copy document and will appear differently in different practice based IT systems. Therefore an initial content summary and overview document is available on our [resource hub](#). This document is only a guide containing information that will hopefully assist you in planning local activity to support improvements in the uptake and quality of Annual Health Checks. The official clinical template will be made available through the GP system.

## Core messages

### Directed at GPs / GP practices:

- Ensuring patients with a learning disability are on the learning disability register and having an Annual Health Check, resulting in a Health Action Plan, will help us address health inequalities.
- Adding Additional Information (AI) to patients' Summary Care Records (SCR) will help improve quality of care for patients when and if they are treated by other services, including emergency and urgent care.
- Providing AI to other services may decrease the number of calls to your surgery, freeing up valuable time and resources.
- SCR AI uses existing information already recorded in the GP system and therefore helps to reduce the need for data entry into numerous systems – saving time and effort in the long run and maximising efficiency across the system.
- From 1st August 2016 all organisations that provide NHS care or adult social care are legally required to adhere to the [Accessible Information Standard](#). Using SCR with AI in your practice can help you meet your legal requirements.

### Directed at individuals with a learning disability or a learning disability and autism:

- You need to be signed up with a GP and on the GP learning disability register to get a free health check once a year.
- Your Summary Care Record is a short summary of your GP medical records. It tells other health and care staff (who care for you) about the medicines you take and any allergies. This means they can give you better care if you need health care away from your usual doctor's surgery. For example:
  - in an emergency
  - when you're on holiday
  - when your surgery is closed
  - at out-patient clinics
  - when you visit a pharmacy
- You can add more information by asking your doctor. This could include:
  - health problems like dementia or diabetes

- details of your carer
  - your treatment preferences
  - your communication needs
- When you are treated away from your usual doctor's surgery, the health care staff cannot see your GP medical records. With your permission, other health professionals treating you can view your Summary Care Record. This can help speed up your care and make sure you are given the right medicines and treatment. This includes people who treat you in an emergency and in routine scheduled care (such as hospital appointments).
- Ask your doctor about your Summary Care Record, how to add more information to it and give permission for it to be used to get the best healthcare.

#### **Directed at families and carers of individuals with a learning disability:**

- People with a learning disability can have a free health check every year to help them stay fit and healthy. To have the health check they need to be on their GPs learning disability register.
- You can ask for an individual with a learning disability to have an Annual Health Check with their doctor if they are on the learning disability register.
- After the health check, the individual should have a health action plan put in place to make sure they are getting the very best care.
- With the individuals permission, or in some cases the carer or family members permission, the GP can add additional information to the individuals Summary Care Record (SCR), including:
  - health problems like dementia or diabetes
  - details of their carer or next of kin
  - their treatment preferences
  - their communication needs
- When the individual is treated away from their usual doctor's surgery, the health care staff cannot see their GP medical records. With the persons permission (or in some cases a family member or carers), other health professionals treating the person can view their Summary Care Record. This can help speed up the persons care and make sure they are given the right medicines and treatment. This includes people who treat the individual in an emergency and in routine scheduled care (such as hospital appointments).

**Suggested copy** – to adapt and share via your existing newsletters, updates, e-updates, bulletins, alerts etc.

**Directed at GPs / GP practice staff:**

## **Save time and resources, improve care for disadvantaged patients and meet your legal requirements**

Data indicates there is clear [disparity](#) across the south of England in the level of care being received by individuals with a learning disability – specifically relating to uptake and the quality of annual health checks.

Ensuring your patients with a learning disability are on the GP learning disability register will lead to better healthcare outcomes for this often disadvantaged group. Once on the register all those eligible (aged 14 and over) should be having an annual health check – helping reduce recognised health inequalities.

NHS England, through negotiations on the new GP contract, has achieved agreement on an increased payment (£140). Alongside this, a new national electronic Health Check (learning disabilities) clinical template has been produced to aid you with this enhanced service health check. Work is underway with GP IT system providers to make this template available on your IT system.

Another way you can help your patients with a learning disability is by asking for their consent to add Additional Information (AI) to their Summary Care Record (SCR). This will help improve quality of care for patients when and if they are treated by other services, including emergency and urgent care. Providing AI to other services may also decrease the number of calls to your surgery, freeing up valuable time and resources.

SCR AI uses existing information already recorded in the GP system and therefore helps to reduce the need for data entry into numerous systems. In addition, all organisations that provide NHS care or adult social care are legally required to follow the [Accessible Information Standard](#) and using SCR with AI in your practice will help you meet this.

**Directed at individuals with a learning disability:**

**[Don't miss out on getting the very best healthcare](#)**

If you have a learning disability you can get extra support when visiting the doctor.

To get extra support and the very best healthcare you need to be on the learning disability register.

Ask the receptionist at your doctor's surgery if you are on the register. If you are not on the register then ask for an appointment with your doctor. At the appointment tell your doctor you have a learning disability and would like to be added to the register. You can use this [letter](#) to tell your doctor you want to be added to the register.

Once you are on the register, ask your doctor if you can have a free health check every year. During this check your doctor will take a closer look at how you are doing – making sure you are healthy and stay healthy.

Your doctor can also talk to you about your Summary Care Record which is a short summary of your GP medical records. With your permission, other health and care staff can access your Summary Care Record so they know about the medicines you take and any allergies. This includes people who treat you in an emergency and in routine scheduled care (such as hospital appointments).

Tell your doctor they can add more information to your record so you don't miss out.

**Directed at families and carers of individuals with a learning disability:**

## **Care for someone with a learning disability? Don't let them miss out**

If you care for someone with a learning disability, they can get extra support when visiting their doctor – all you or they have to do is ask for their name to be added to the GP learning disability register. You can help them do this by talking to their doctor's surgery or use this [template letter](#). Complete this letter and give it to the doctor during their next appointment.

Once on the register they can speak to their doctor about having a free Health Check every year. There are lots of reasons why they should have their Annual Health Check if their doctor says they can have one, including:

- Not always knowing if they are unwell – the doctor can spot signs that you or the individual might miss,
- Getting better treatment – for example new medication
- It offers an opportunity for them to talk to the doctor about anything worrying them
- The doctor can provide advice on lifestyle choices, such as diet
- They can have more control in their own health and body

Make sure the doctor gives them a health action plan after the health check – this includes goals for them and the doctor to work towards together.

Another way you can ensure they are getting the very best healthcare is by supporting them to give their doctor consent for their information to be shared. With the individuals permission, or in some cases the carer or family members permission, the doctor can add additional information to the individuals Summary Care Record (SCR).

Everyone has a SCR – speak to the doctor about the individual giving consent for Additional Information (AI) to be stored, this can include details of their learning disability, any physical/sensory disability, communication needs, contact details of a carer or next of kin etc., allows all health professionals who care for them to know their latest needs and requirements.

## ER poster letter/email copy

– copy to use for sharing the ER poster with GP practices, advocacy/charity and community groups

It is well recognised that [people with learning disabilities have poorer physical and mental health](#) compared to others, and a lower life expectancy. One way we can help address this is by increasing the number of people recorded on the learning disability register. Once on the register they can have a free annual health check. In addition, getting additional information added to a person with learning disabilities Summary Care Record will help all NHS health care professional know their latest needs and requirements.

Please find three posters enclosed for you to print and display in your premises. Two of the posters are in easy read for those with a learning disability and the third is targeted at families and carers of individuals with a learning disability. Thank you for your support.

**Easy read (ER) poster** \*designed to be displayed in GP practice waiting rooms, around hospitals, offices and in community settings. High res versions for download are available on the [resource hub](#). Contact Mencap 0808 808 1111 / [helpline@mencap.org.uk](mailto:helpline@mencap.org.uk) to request copies of the Don't Miss Out poster.

### Do you have a learning disability? (A4 and A3)



### Annual Health Check (A4)



### Know someone... (A4)





# Let's start a conversation so people don't miss out

## Social media messaging

### Facebook

Individuals with a learning disability:

- **Don't miss out on getting the very best healthcare**

If you have a learning disability you can get extra support when visiting the doctor. To get extra support you need to be on the learning disability register. Use this [letter](#) or tell your doctor you have a learning disability and would like to be added to the register. Once on the register you can have a free Annual Health Check to make sure you stay fit and healthy.

- **Don't miss out by adding information to your Summary Care Record**

Your Summary Care Record is a short summary of your GP medical records. With your permission it tells other health and care staff (who care for you) about the medicines you take, any allergies and your needs. This includes people who treat you in an emergency and in routine scheduled care (such as hospital appointments). Tell your doctor they can add more information to your record so you don't miss out.

Families and carers of individuals with a learning disability:

- **Care for someone with a learning disability? Don't let them miss out**

Someone with a learning disability can get extra support when visiting their doctor – all you or they have to do is ask for their name to be added to the learning disability register. You can help them do this by talking to their doctor's surgery or use this [template letter](#). Once on the register they can have an Annual Health Check to help them stay fit and healthy.

- **Care for someone with a learning disability? Don't let them miss out**

There are lots of reasons why they should have their Annual Health Check, including:

- Not always knowing if they are unwell – the doctor can spot signs that you or the individual might miss,
  - Getting better treatment – for example new medication
  - It offers an opportunity for them to talk to the doctor about anything worrying them
  - The doctor can provide advice on lifestyle choices, such as diet
  - They can have more control in their own health and body
- **Care for someone with a learning disability? Don't let them miss out**  
Support them to give their doctor consent for their information to be shared. With the individuals permission, or in some cases the carer or family members permission, the doctor can add additional information to the individuals Summary Care Record.

Everyone has a SCR and Additional Information can include details of their learning disability, any physical or sensory disabilities and communication needs – helping all health professionals who care for them to know their latest needs and requirements.

#### Twitter – suggested tweets:

- Get the very best health care by telling your doctor you have a #learningdisability <http://bit.ly/2o4Efzt> #dontmissout
- Missing out on an annual health check? Tell your doctor you have a learning disability – use this easy read letter <http://bit.ly/2o4Efzt>
- Adding more info to a person with learning disabilities Summary Care Record will help them get the very best health care #dontmissout
- Care for someone with a #learningdisability? Don't let them miss out. Access helpful guides and resources: <http://bit.ly/2o4Efzt>
- If you join the GP learning disability register you can have a free health check. Hear from those who have <https://youtu.be/z8407Uzys3E>

**Social media graphics** - \*Facebook and Twitter sized graphics are available to download on the [resource hub](#).

**NHS**


**Being on the Doctors learning disability register will help you get the best healthcare.**

**NHS**



**Care for someone with a learning disability?**

**NHS**



**Ask your doctor to add more information to your Summary Care Record.**

## Resource hub

- Visit our [resource hub](#) to download guides, videos, leaflets and templates – including easy read – available for use locally when communicating with individuals who have a learning disability, their families and carers about the learning disability register (held by the GP), Annual Health Checks and Summary Care Record with Additional Information.

## Upcoming resources

- Updated step-by-step guide to the learning disability annual health check by Royal College of General Practitioners – due to be published April 2017.
- New resources and activities under production with the National Development Team for Inclusion and the Voluntary Organisations Disability Group to support social care providers to engage with the health check process – due to be published April 2017.
- TBC: Hear from a Doctor who advocates Summary Care Records with additional information – video case study of a Doctor (in the south of England) talking about the benefits of AHC / SCR AI for individuals with a learning disability.